

FALL 2018  
VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1

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Assistant Attorney General

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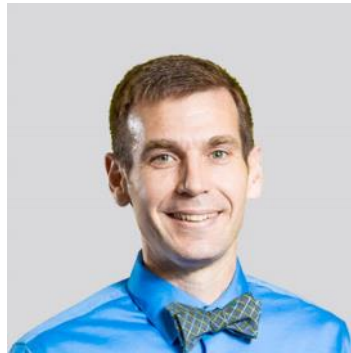
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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## **Board Member Spotlight | Jonathan Zecher, PT**



On April 20<sup>th</sup> of this year, Board Member Chad Hobbs, who represented the 5<sup>th</sup> congressional district resigned his position on the board to pursue a medical degree. After receiving nominations for his replacement, on May 21<sup>st</sup>, Governor Kay Ivey appointed Jonathan Zecher from Madison, AL to complete the term that runs through October of 2019.

Jonathan is the founding partner of Focus Physiotherapy and the Director of Education.

A graduate of University of Alabama in Birmingham's Department of Physical Therapy, Jonathan has been a manual therapist in the Huntsville/Madison area since 1999.

Jonathan has a passion for clinical education and devotes his time mentoring other therapists in their manual skills and clinical reasoning. He completed his advanced credentialing in manual therapy in 2004 and finished his certification as an orthopedic specialist from the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties the following year. He finished his fellowship in orthopedic manual therapy in 2009. In 2015, Jonathan received his Physical Therapy Doctor of Science from Andrews University.

Jonathan is married to his wife Jackie, a former math teacher. Jonathan and Jackie have 4 children with whom they enjoy sports and outdoor activities.

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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## Compact Update | Wiley Christian, III, Board Chair

The State of Alabama Board of Physical Therapy continues to monitor the progress of the Physical Therapy Compact. The board remains aware of the growing interest in providing licensure portability for military spouses and increasing consumer access in our states rural areas.

The Physical Therapy Compact was introduced as a state-based solution to the challenges of interstate licensure portability for physical therapist and physical therapist assistants. It is designed to improve patient access to physical therapy services by giving eligible licensees in participating states a faster, less expensive alternative to traditional licensure and streamline the mechanism for PT's and PTA's to practice across state lines. In the interim the State of Alabama Board of Physical Therapy has streamlined its licensure process in part by adopting the FSBPT's alternative approval process.

Although the Physical Therapy Compact requires separate legislation, it will not change the scope of practice of PT's and PTA's; however, the therapists will be required to follow the practice act of the state where they're practicing.

If adopted, eligible PT's and PTA's in Compact states will have the option of obtaining a Compact Privilege in other participation states. To do so the licensed participant must hold a valid, current unrestricted license in their primary participating Compact state, and be free of any disciplinary actions for at least two years.

According to the APTA and FSBPT several states have adopted the Compact legislation which includes the bordering states of Tennessee and Mississippi. There is also ongoing Compact interest in Georgia and Florida. Alabama's interest in eventual participation seems to be a logical consideration.

We encourage interested licensees to seek additional information through the Compact web site at [www.ptcompact.org](http://www.ptcompact.org), and would appreciate your feedback. Please share your thoughts with us on the Physical Therapy Compact by emailing us at [info@pt.alabama.gov](mailto:info@pt.alabama.gov).

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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## A Consumer's Perspective

Margaret Hemm, Ed.D., CCC-SLP

Consumer Member

As a Consumer Member of the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy, my main priority is to represent the public by ensuring that all licensees are qualified to practice physical therapy and are following the rules and regulations set forth by the Board as stated in the Administrative Code. I also serve on the Violations Committee and make recommendations to the Board concerning discipline and/or revocation of licenses of such persons.

I am passionate about the public having access to physical therapy services, particularly in the rural counties of Alabama. With more beneficiaries having healthcare insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act of 2012 and the baby boomers starting to retire, the need is even greater despite the growth in graduates from physical therapy programs in our State. As of 10/1/2018, there was only a 1% growth in total licensees from the previous year. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) developed a model projecting the supply and demand of physical therapists for 2010-2025, ([research-dept@apta.org](mailto:research-dept@apta.org)). Overall, the model projects a national shortage of physical therapists in 2025 based on attrition rates of 2.5% (9,592) and 3.5% (26,560).



What can we all do? I want to encourage everyone to take the opportunity this year to go and speak at a career fair in your local communities to let high school, and even junior high school, students know about the field of physical therapy. Allow students to observe and/or volunteer in your practices to educate them about what you do. Hold open houses and offer incentives to individuals willing to work in our rural communities. Please follow us and share your stories on our Twitter and Facebook page.

You CAN have a positive impact

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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## **Physical Therapy Aide Proposed Language** | Alina Adams, PT Board Member, 4th District

The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy (ALBPT) voted at its October 18, 2018 meeting to move forward with significant changes to the Administrative Code section dealing with the roles and responsibilities of the physical therapy aide [700-X-3-.03 (c)]. This proposed change is part of a comprehensive review of the Administrative Code that seeks to assure that the document is clear, concise and focused on public safety. This vote follows a lengthy discussion in response to public inquiry as well as focused review by a committee. However, prior to submitting the proposed physical therapy aide draft language through official channels, the Board is seeking public input to further refine the proposed language. The information in this article briefly reviews the development process that lead to this change as well as an invitation for public comment.

Over the past year, the ALBPT has worked on a comprehensive review of the Administrative Code document – the document that outlines the day-to-day rules governing the practice of physical therapy in the state of Alabama. This review has included a significant reduction in the overall length of the document, primarily by eliminating details that are found in other State of Alabama governing documents. For example, sections related to the employment of personnel or quorum were removed. Items have also been eliminated for which the ALBPT does not have statutory authority. For example, the section that previously attempted to restrict an ALBPT member from serving in a policy-holding position with the American Physical Therapy Association was removed. Efforts have also been made to simplify the language when possible. For example, the section on advertising (700-X-3-.04) has been reduced from two full pages to four succinct bullet points.

While engaged in this review process, the ALBPT was approached by a therapist seeking clarification regarding the phrase “an aide may perform restorative care” [700-X-3-.03(c)(11)]. While the ALBPT recognized that the clinical use of the term “restorative aide” may be historically related to the development of this rule, the group also recognized that care that is designed to ‘restore’ function is a skilled service and thus solely the responsibility of licensed personnel. Thus began the lengthy discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the physical therapy aide and ultimately to the realization that much of the current language appears to give “permission” for the aide to provide services that require the decision making skills of a licensee. Or, at a minimum, if the aide is engaged in providing some of the services described then subsequent billing for those services would most likely constitute fraud.

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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

Ultimately a committee was appointed to study the issue and bring forth draft language. At the October meeting the ALBPT reached consensus regarding the proposed language. However, prior to moving this proposal through established channel for implementation, the ALBPT agreed that it would be desirable to seek public input to further refine the language if needed.

To view a copy of the proposed draft, please visit

<https://albpt.wordpress.com/2018/11/20/al-board-of-pt-physical-therapy-aide-proposed-language/>

where a strike-through version of the draft language is available. Also posted is a survey link to provide feedback. The posted document and survey will be available until the next ALBPT meeting – December 13, 2018 – where provided comments will be reviewed.

Comments may also be emailed to [info@pt.alabama.gov](mailto:info@pt.alabama.gov)

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this issue.

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PW9D773>

*(survey available through December 12)*

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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

Here's what will be new in 2019 | Jeffrey Vinzant, Executive Director

Looking ahead to 2019, the Board has two changes that will take place in December and January that will change the application process and the functionality of the board's website.

The first change set to take place in December is the pending changes to Chapter 2 of the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Administrative Code. This past summer, the Board voted in approval of the Alternative Approval Process for applicants for licensure by exam in the State of Alabama. What this change is essentially going to do is speed up the process for graduating PT and PTA students by removing the requirement of a completed licensure application prior to applying to take the National Physical Therapy Exam. In the new process, faculty members will now certify directly to FSBPT that the candidate has completed all course and clinical work and is pending graduation. Once this is confirmed by the faculty member, the candidate will register to sit for the NPTE. During the exam registration process, the candidate must select the state that scores are to be sent to and acknowledge that they understand that passing the exam does not equal licensure. This new process will assist the candidates with their finances in that both the cost of the NPTE and licensure will not be due all at one time. It is important to emphasize that if the candidate wants to practice under a temporary license, they will not be able to do so until a completed application is on file with the board.

Another code change that will take effect is the requirement for Alabama Jurisprudence for applicants obtaining licensure in our state by endorsement. The new requirement is that these individuals will now have to complete the two-hour Alabama PT Jurisprudence continuing education requirement within 30 days of licensure in Alabama. The board recognized that there was the potential for traveling practitioners to come into Alabama, complete their assignment, and leave Alabama without being exposed to the laws of physical therapy practice in Alabama. The board members agreed that within the mission to protect the public, it is necessary for incoming practitioners to understand the law and be exposed accordingly.

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Lastly, the board members voted to update the licensee management software of the board office operation. The new technology is going to be a web-based product that will allow new applicants the ability to upload documents and will move the board to a full online payment system with the intent of eliminating the need for money orders and cashier check payments. Additionally, the new enhancements will provide for more information for the public regarding disciplinary actions. The new database enhancements are set for a late January implementation.

If you have any questions or comments you would like to share about these upcoming changes, please email us at [info@pt.alabama.gov](mailto:info@pt.alabama.gov)

### **Regular Board Meetings**

December 13, 2018 (Board Office, Montgomery)

February 7, 2019 (Board Office, Montgomery)

April, 2019 **TBA** (Nominations meeting & Jurisprudence seminar)

June 20, 2019 (Board Office, Montgomery)

*(all meetings at 10:00 AM)*

**We invite you to join us! All Board meetings are open to the public.**

### **Licensees!**

**Please keep all of your contact information up to date with the board office.  
Most important information to keep us advised of:**

- **Name change**
- **Mailing address change**
- **E-mail address change**
- **Phone number change**

**All information can be changed by filling out the DATA UPDATE form  
available on our website!**



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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## **Wellness Program Update**

Nathan McGriff, PTA  
Wellness Program Liaison

The Physical Therapy Board's substance abuse program continues to function very well. Of the fourteen individuals who are currently participating in the program, all have entered the program through the self-reporting process. This allows the licensee to get the needed treatment, without jeopardizing their license. All of the participants are compliant and have a mentor assigned to them. The mentor component of the program is one of the keys to success. We all owe these individuals our gratitude and thanks for their time and willingness to serve in this capacity. Dr. Michael Garver, Director of the program, feels it is functioning as it was designed to and is very pleased.

Mentors are the key to preventing recidivism. A mentor is an individual who can communicate with licensees with understanding, care, and empathy. We continue to solicit individuals who themselves have had a substance abuse problem and are in recovery. These individuals will be working directly with Dr. Garver. Their identity is known only to him and not the Board. The Wellness Program needs volunteers who have had that experience, and who are willing to reach out and help their professional colleagues along their road to recovery.

If you are willing and interested, please contact the Wellness Program Director, Dr. Michael Garver:

Michael Garver, DMD  
19260 North Mobile Street  
P.O. Box 426  
Citronelle, AL 36522

Phone: (251) 866-5585  
Fax: (251) 866-5570  
E-mail: [abptwellness@gmail.com](mailto:abptwellness@gmail.com)

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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## **Disciplinary Notifications**

Case #	19-01-04
Allegation:	Practiced with expired license.
Disposition:	Fine
Closed :	October 18, 2018
Name:	Sherri Stewart, PTH1095

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Case #	19-01-09
Allegation:	Practiced with expired license.
Disposition:	Fine
Closed:	October 30, 2018
Name:	Heather Andrews, PTA6794

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Case #	19-02-05
Allegation:	Practiced with expired license.
Disposition:	Fine
Closed:	November 9, 2018
Name:	Sandra Ann Bittman, PTA8452

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